

HOMESTAKE

The other issue that I've been asked about is Homestake, and I want to explain what that is for those in the television audience that haven't been exposed to the issue. Over the past few years, various state officials and interest groups have discussed the possible state purchase of approximately 30,000 acres of land in Crook County. This property is generally referred to as "Homestake" or "Moskee." Legislative proposals will be offered for your consideration during this session. Again, I encourage the discussion. There is a vision for the property that includes citizen access to national forest, hunting, fishing, and a wide array of citizen activities and multiple.

An approach to this problem has been outlined whereby the state secures a one-year option to purchase the property. This would allow a full evaluation of the property and the significant policy changes that are implied in its purchase. The options for evaluation would include everything from the public benefits, how we would pay for it, and how we would pay for the operating costs.

Such an approach is only logical; it is a significant investment, and I would urge you to move with caution if you choose to move, because the devil is in the details. That is particularly true in real estate transactions. Make sure we know what we're deciding if we decide to pursue it. I would note in passing that I have opposition to the purchase of the property from the permanent school account funds. I believe that those funds need to be invested for maximum return, and the purchase of this property would not achieve that.

WATER AND WILDLIFE

The other thing we should not forget is that the same national energy economy that fills our coffers could inadvertently turn our state into a water and wildlife wasteland. This is no time to reduce our efforts to protect our environment, our water and our wildlife. Do we want future generations to conclude that those of us in this hall traded the Wyoming heritage for a few years of high government revenues and low personal taxes? I think not.